

Accessible Event Planning

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Nice to meet you!

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Accessible events are inclusive!

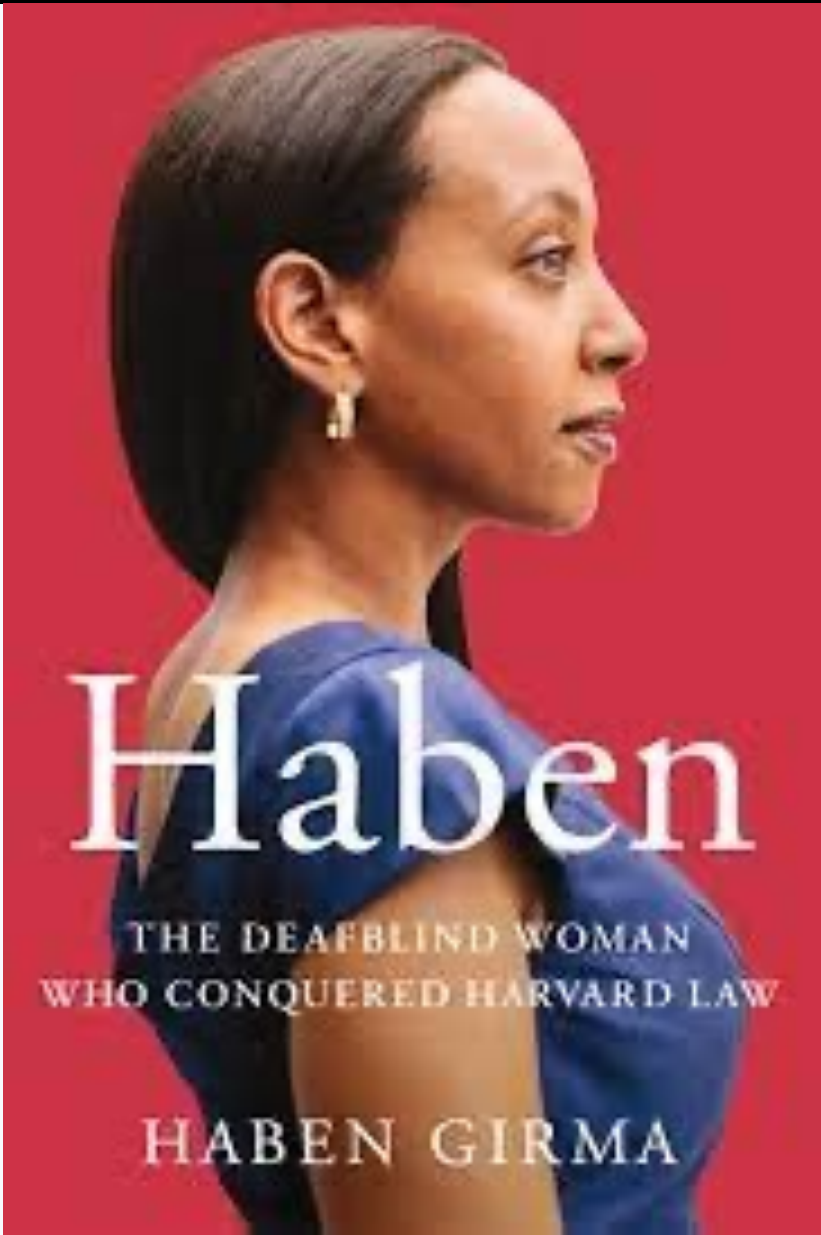
Learning Objectives

- Part 1: The technical aspects of creating accessible presenter/panel type events.
- Part 1: Understand the planning time needed to match possible audience needs to event access.
- Part 2: How to plan and ensure access for people with mobile disabilities attending events.

Premise

It is our thought that accessibility needs to guide every part of meeting and event planning. Accessibility should be the first plans put in writing, even before seeking a platform/venue, caterer, presenter, or any other aspect of event planning.

2020 Diversity Symposium



Facts:

- Invited presenter
- Online only event
- Girma on camera and speaking (audio/video)
- Realtime Captions provided by CIDI
- Technical support on both ends required
- Moderator read questions/comments

Outcome:

- Successful inclusive event!

Statistics

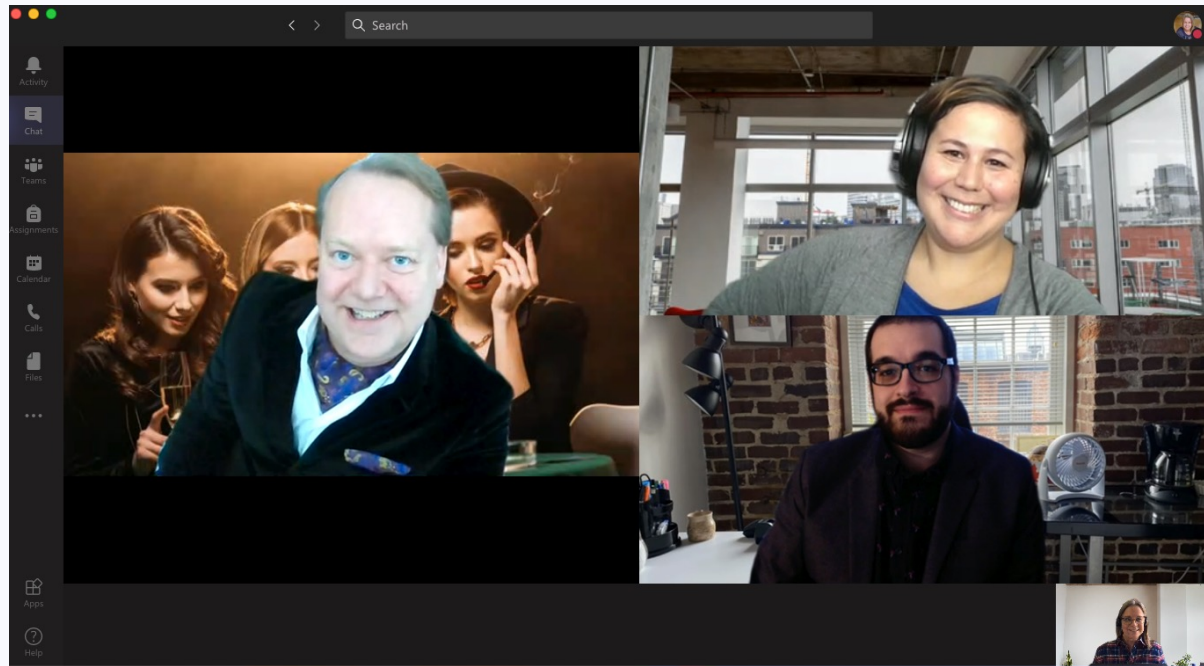
According to the World Health Organization, adults with disabilities make up 15% of the world's population. That is equivalent to a country the size of China.

According NIDCD (2016), “one in eight people in the United States (13 percent, or 30 million) aged 12 years or older has hearing loss in both ears.”



“About 2 percent of adults aged 45 to 54 have disabling hearing loss. The rate increases to 8.5 percent for adults aged 55 to 64.” (NIDCD, 2016).

Online or In-Person Inclusion



Event Planning Timelines

Large events – begin planning 16 weeks prior to event

Smaller meetings – these steps can be used in an abbreviated fashion

[Georgia Tech Special Events Resource Guide](#)

[ADA: A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People With Disabilities](#)

Early planning stages vs. last minute event on campus

Have a plan for both.

Online, virtual, remote...

Online meetings/events should follow the Web Content Guidelines (WCAG)!

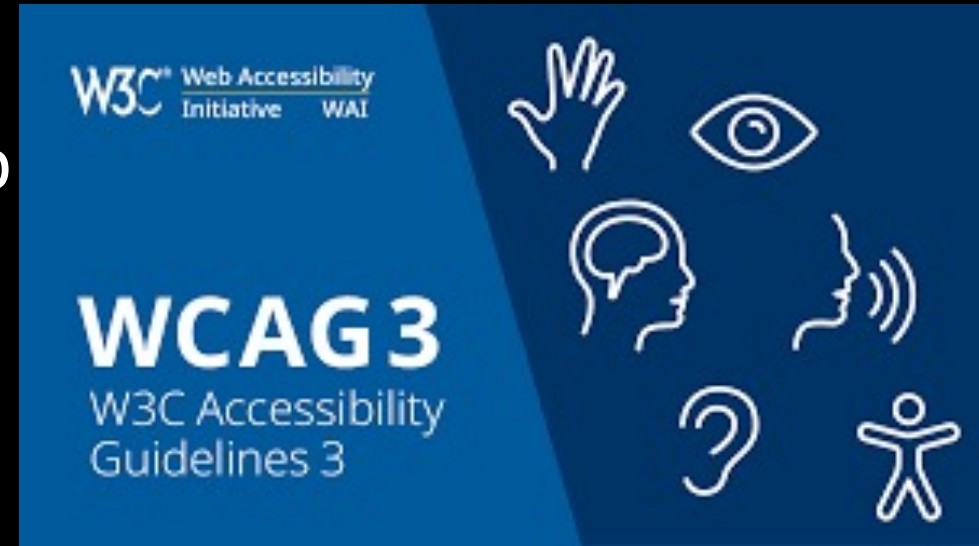
Key guidelines:

Select accessible platforms

Provide access for hard of hearing and deaf participants (captioning, interpreting)

Describe any text, image, or figures – never assume your participants can read the slides

Provide multiple means of engaging (Beware: polls, keyboard input, use of color, contrast)



What comes first?

16 weeks

- Select platform/venue
 - Ensure platform chosen is accessible (Zoom, Blackboard)
 - Ensure physical accessibility of meeting space
 - Presenters selected & informed
- Set budget
 - Accommodations services
 - A/V technology
 - Accommodations for programs



12 weeks

- Update registration/website with accessibility information- **Announce event (8-12 weeks)**
- Plan for captioning services, interpreting, and technology

Registration tools

Announcement for accommodation requests

- When it should go out
 - With registration at least 8 – 12 weeks in advance of event
 - Note deadline required for accommodation requests in registration
- How far in advance do these requests need to come in to reasonably meet the accommodation request?
 - 30 days is widely accepted as reasonable time
 - Two weeks is the minimum time to possibly meet accommodation needs

If an attendee knows they have an accommodation need, and do not request the accommodation in advance, you are not obligated to provide these accommodations. *Alert – open access events must provide accessibility.

Many services, devices, and teams cannot be sourced on short notice.

Event announcement

General

Specifics of event (What, Where, When, Who, How, cost, registration).

Accessibility options built-in the event design:

PowerPoints, handouts, app links, provided at least one day before event.

Accessibility of platform, venue, food options. (Helps people to see inclusive practices).

Accommodation Requests

A statement placed on conference or event material indicating your willingness to provide reasonable accommodations when requested.



Examples

CIDI provides accessibility for all; however, some access requires advance notice to ensure adequate time to prepare. **If you need accessibility services, including captioning, please let us know two (2) weeks prior to the (event/webinar/conference), so arrangements can be made for you.**

For more information please contact 404-894-####.

All handouts for live webinars will be posted the day before the webinar. Handouts typically consist of the complete Power Point presentation, as well as any additional resources presenters make available. Access to handouts is available in the Tools for Life webinar archives on the Tools for Life wiki.

If you need additional accessibility services, including captioning, please contact `name@gtfl.gatech.edu` two (2) weeks prior to the date of the live webinar.

10 - 8 weeks

10 weeks

- Send any videos that will be used to be captioned (IMPORTANT!)
- Ensure room blocks include accessible rooms
 - Ensure physical accessibility
- Order alternate listening device systems
- Revisit room setups for accommodations

8 weeks

- Confirm captionists and/or ASL interpreters
- Address registration process/website accessibility issues
- Place orders for e-text and braille program materials



Event ramp- up

6 weeks

- A/V walk-through to ensure captioning setup and audio is in place
- Continue monitoring accommodation requests

Requests not considered previously should be planned

- Physical space walk-through of meeting space

4 weeks

- Final check for accommodation requests (presenters and guests) **(2 – 4 weeks)**
- Submit accessible speaker materials for e-text or braille if needed
- Plan to contact guests with accommodation needs to confirm their details

- Accessible website, apps, registration, programs
 - Braille?
 - Large print?
 - Accessible PDF remediation?
- Captioning on videos
- Plan for real-time captioning for presentations
 - Considering real-time-streaming? **This presents additional technical challenges**
- Audio description – if needed
- Are there performances or visual exhibits that need to be described?
- Will things be drawn/displayed/demonstrated, "pointed to" or "you can see behind me that the x y's when z"
 - Provide some guidance to presenters to integrate more complete descriptions
 - Descriptions should sound like a radio announcer's coverage of a ball game

Realtime Captioning/Interpreting

Submit orders for captioning or interpreting as soon as the date and time is determined.

Your participants need several weeks' notice of the scheduled meeting, go ahead and secure captionists or interpreters at the planning stage as well.

Include platform information. Include agenda, list of speaker's names, Power Point, and scripts if available.

Advantage

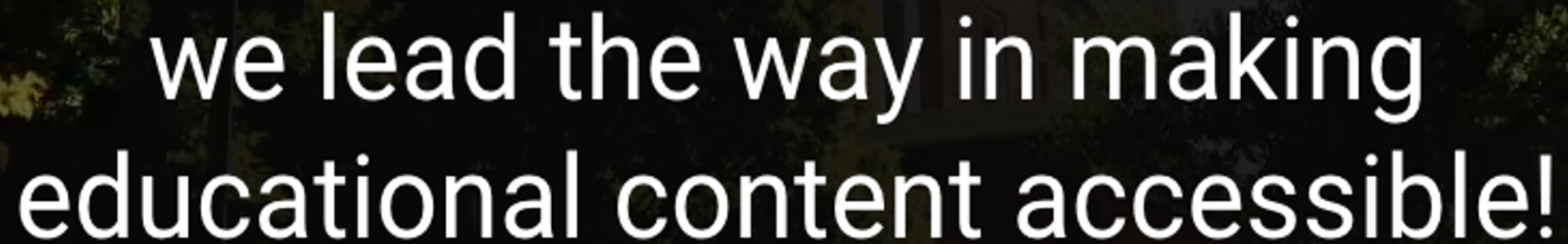
Captions provide a text representation of the event or meeting. Text transcripts may be used as review of the event. Text is easily searched by search engines and may be located by others.

Auto-Generated Captions vs. Human Captions

Some platforms provide auto-generated captions (Teams, Google Meet, YouTube, Zoom).

Auto-generated captions accuracy is between 89% and 91%. May be practical for low-stakes information and when the participants are very familiar with the information. Inform the participants that auto-generated captions are being considered.

For higher-stakes events or meetings (policy, human resources, training, certification, unfamiliar topics, etc.) auto-generated captions should NOT be used. Missing 9% - 11% of the information is discriminatory to those who cannot hear clearly. For these events a human captionist will be required. Alternative: Record your event and have it closed captioned before presenting to participants.



we lead the way in making
educational content accessible!

ASL Interpreters

Request at least two interpreters when you expect deaf ASL-using participants.

One interpreter will serve as the interpreter who signs everything said by the presenters and the other interpreter will be used to voice what the ASL-using participants are signing.

If the event is scheduled more than one hour, the agency may require three to four interpreters. One will be assigned to interpreting, one assigned to voicing, and one to two assigned to provide support and relief to either.

Interpreters and captionists follow a code of ethics.



Services provided during event

ASL Interpreters

- Interpreters can only sign a certain number of continuous minutes (less than 45 for most) and will require a partner/alternate (this means a minimum of two interpreters for a two-hour session)
- Will you need a series of interpreters for multiple individuals based on event schedule? (Multiple tracks, break out sessions)
- Ensure that your event planner's budget for the appropriate number of interpreters needed for the duration of their event
- Interpreters may want to “meet” DHH attendees they will be assisting. Helpful to know if individual was born deaf, lost hearing later in life, communication preference, etc.

Communication Needs



Wifi vs hard-wired internet connectivity

- If your presenters are showing video or online content, have hard-wired connection.
- Captionist/Interpreter is remote – audio is paramount, but in some situations seeing speaker is helpful.

Streaming Live

- This is a much larger undertaking if you are using remote captioning /Interpreting services
- Consider the delay for your remote audience

Do your videos need captioning and/or audio descriptions?

- This will require four weeks* additional preparation time, plan accordingly

Audio Issues

Ensure your speech is clear and understood by interpreters, captionists, and other participants with hearing.

It is essential you have a quality microphone, lavalier, or table-top near your mouth. Do not depend on built-in microphone from a laptop to suffice.



Plan for internet glitching and interruptions:

Plan for failures and have a backup plan if presenters or participants are unable to maintain their connection for the scheduled event. Announce this early in the meeting as just a fact of life, so no one feels like they personally let you down or missed out.

Programs and presentation materials

- Consider cognitive load when using tables, graphs, etc.
 - Tables are a visual relay, but can be complicated for screen readers and those with cognitive disabilities
- Include alternate text for any images that are not decorative in nature (Beware: Infographics)
- Use [plain language](https://www.plainlanguage.gov) (plainlanguage.gov)
- People first language (unless someone has a preference for identity-first)
 - Consider the Deaf community prefers Deaf person, not person who is deaf.
- Program materials
 - Ensure large print or braille formats are available if requested
- Presentations (Power Points) required in advance from speakers (set advance expectations):
 - Captionists/Interpreters (1-2 weeks)
 - Creating accessible PPTX (4-6 weeks)
 - To load to your website or app (1 week)

Show accessibility

Include examples of people with disabilities in presentations

- Photos and videos of people with disabilities (Getty Images, search others)
- Include example situations that include people with disabilities. There are people with various disabilities in all professions that may be highlighted



Event rules

- Decide when you want participants to comment or ask questions/use chat feature.

Explain these to the participants early in the meeting.

ASL users and others may not use English word order and may have misspellings – do not discredit these comments - have someone with strong word attack skills in charge of reading these messages.

- Set up how you will get things back on track when it goes off topic.

The interpreters and captionists will stay true to the message and continue to voice/write whoever is commenting until you get things back on track.

- Choose a platform that allows the moderator to mute everyone and warn people when you do.

Deaf participants may not realize a housemate just turned on the TV volume or is unloading the dishwasher.

Accessibility tools (a11y)

Be aware that automated checkers do not catch all accessibility issues

[W3C WAI Website Accessibility Checkers](#)

[Color contrast checkers](#)

Document Accessibility Checkers

- [MS Word a11y checker](#)
- [Adobe a11y checker](#)

Color-blindness simulators

- [Coblis1 – Color Blindness Simulator](#)
- [ColorOracle](#)

Part 2: In-Person Events

For hybrid events, combine part 1 and part 2.



Accessible In-Person events often require planning 6 months – 1 year in advance

Plan to visit and test the venue's claim of accessibility

- Accessible event space
- Ensure hotel has ample accessible rooms of all varieties
- Ensure near-by accessible food options are available (not just hotel restaurant)
- Event facilities – may need to train the staff in advance
- Lighting (considerations for low vision/vision impairment)
- Width of walkways
- Availability of assisted listening systems

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section

[Expanding Your Market: Accessible Information Exchange - Meeting on a Level Playing Field](#)

Closer look - venue



- Does the elevator really provide reasonable access to the seating areas? (mezzanine or terrace level)
- What about the turn radius of doors & hallways
 - Can those using chairs and scooters make the turn?
- Do heavy bathroom doors need to be propped open?
- Location of signage on popsicle stands/easels
 - Are these located in places that will become a transit hazard?
 - Is braille signage available?
 - Color contrast on signage

Room set-up

- How many people seated (theatre, classroom, rounds, u-shaped/conference)
- Meeting planning standard is 3 square feet per person – this needs to be increased for accessibility in effect reducing the number of people you can actually safely include
- Distance between tables and chairs should allow for movement of wheelchairs and also include actual mobility space behind chairs when audience is seated (Table-cloth alert!)
- Chairs with no arms are ideal
- Consider placement of screens for captioning
 - Realtime captioning will require PPTX to allow space for captioning window OR
 - An additional captioning screen alongside each presentation screen
- Microphones (podium, lavalier, table/panel, audience)

Service Animals

The same rules that apply to service animals in classrooms apply at your events.

- ESAs are not Service Animals and are not covered by federal regulations.
- Approved Service Animals are a dog or a miniature horse – there are no other approved Service Animals.
- Hotels and facilities may not allow ESAs in rooms/facilities without paying a deposit or fee.

If you know you will have Service Animals:

- Plan to make water bowls available throughout
- Ensure there are pee pads/stations outside (not in grassy spaces)
- Include plans to provide additional waste bags for guests

[ADA Service Animals Booklet/Website](#)



Travel Considerations

- Speaker with disability – airport to venue transportation?
- Are you sure you have taxis or transportation that can accommodate more than one attendee with a power chair/wheelchair/scooter?
- Have you ensured your taxi or transportation service will allow service animals?
 - Just because it is the law, does not mean all companies/contractors comply
- Parking – access from parking to facility
 - Do you need to supply accessible vehicles, golf carts, vans, etc.?
- For multi-day events consider a pre-event walk through for low vision/blind guests
- Offsite activities?
 - Transportation
 - Are those facilities accessible?
 - Who facilitates these accommodation needs?



Catering Vendors



Catering setups need to be:

- Accessible
 - Nothing too high or requiring standing
 - Nothing too deep requiring reaching
 - Assistance available for those with limited mobility at self-serve and buffet stations
- Labelled in clear large print for content, type, and allergens
 - Gluten free
 - Kosher
 - Dairy
 - Nuts

A/V Vendor Considerations

Internet Connection For Presenters & Attendees

- Hard wired preferred

Captioning Technology + Screens

Alternative Listening Systems

Microphones

- Podium
- Accessible podium setup
- Lavaliers (Place on top of lapels/collars)
- Tabletop microphones for panel discussions
- In-audience microphones for Q&A
 - Wireless
 - On stands



Assistive Listening Systems



**Assistive
Listening
System
Available**

Does the venue supply?

Have you ordered the systems?

- How far in advance can you setup and test?
- Will your A/V company supply and manage this system?

Day of: Emergency Tool Box

- Move tables perpendicular to wall to allow for passage for wheelchair (more than 36" passage-ways)
- If registration desk is not at accessible height, have personnel come out front to conduct registration.
- Food and drink stations are at accessible height, distance – set temporary station that is accessible.
- Volunteered staff member(s) to provide assistance for information for blind and low-vision individuals in way-finding.
- Person did not request interpreter/captionist at registration opportunity – now shows up expecting interpreter/captionist.
 - Answer not in tool box. Event organizer needs to provide response (in very rare cases this may be solved).

Everything else

- Reset adjustable podium microphone on the floor if stage is inaccessible
- Create a chair level podium with low round skirted table and microphone
- Ask to be hard-wired to internet connection for presenters
 - Have a MiFi device/hotspot for speakers/presenters as a backup
 - Ensure all presenter laptops have been setup for both network and wifi networks
- Have duct tape ready to tape down cables to prevent tripping hazards
- Have all presentations loaded on a tablet or laptop as backup
 - Have flash drive backups available as well



Outcomes



Positive outcomes are possible when meeting planners focus on accessible events.

All attendees benefit from accessible meetings, content, and facilities.

Universal design applies in all events

Answers

okay

NORMAL

ok

NORMAL

OK

KIND OF
OLD

O.K.

LIKE AN ALIEN
IMPERSONATING
A HUMAN

HOW YOUR SPELLING OF "OKAY" MAKES YOU SOUND